

WASHINGTON, DC - House Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer (MD) released the following statement today after the House Energy and Commerce Committee passed the America's Affordable Health Choices Act, the third committee to do so this month:

"The action by the Energy and Commerce Committee to approve legislation that gives Americans the peace of mind of affordable quality health care they can count on is truly historic. For half a century, health reform has remained elusive, and the result has been a system that is more inefficient and costly for families, businesses and our economy every year. Today, we are closer than we have ever been to achieving the change we have sought for so long.

"I commend Chairman Henry Waxman for working to build consensus within a diverse committee to move this legislation forward. I also want to recognize Chairman Emeritus John Dingell for his tireless commitment over more than five decades to improve health care for all Americans. And I want to thank all the members of the committee who worked extraordinarily hard to overcome the challenges in passing such a complex, but significant piece of legislation.

"There is no question that every Member of the Democratic Caucus cares very deeply about this issue, and that has been evident in the vigorous debate we have seen so far throughout this process. But that debate and discussion has made this bill stronger, and the American people will benefit as a result. We never expected this to be easy, but nothing worthwhile ever is.

"That is why we recognize that our work is far from finished. Over the next five weeks, Members of Congress will have an opportunity to review the legislation in its current form and discuss with their constituents how they and their families stand to benefit. I expect that when Congress reconvenes in September we will be in a strong position to pass through the House the health reform America has waited so long to achieve."

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